



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

OPERATION PREDATOR ARRESTS SURPASS 5,000

Los Angeles area accounts for more than 700 arrests in initiative targeting child sex predators

LOS ANGELES – More than 700 of the 5,000 child sex offenders arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as part of an ongoing international initiative known as Operation Predator have occurred in the Los Angeles area, more than any other metropolitan area in the nation.

Michael J. Garcia, Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE, announced today that arrests in the 20-month long effort have surpassed 5,000. So far there have been 766 Predator-related arrests in the seven-county area covered by ICE agents in Los Angeles. Los Angeles County accounted for 391 of those arrests, followed by Orange County (189), Ventura/Santa Barbara County (95), and the Inland Empire (91).

Operation Predator is a comprehensive initiative aimed at those who prey on and exploit children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers, and foreign national predators whose crimes make them deportable. Locally, targets have included a special education teacher, a family care physician, and an 86-year-old man who was traveling to the Philippines to have sex with pre-teen girls.

“Sexual predators will not go unpunished for their heinous crimes,” said Garcia. “Whether the criminal is a U.S. citizen who thinks they can travel overseas to molest children or a pornographer who trades in images of child sexual abuse, or a foreign national who has lost the privilege to remain in the U.S. because of a crime against a child, ICE will identify, arrest, and, where possible, remove them.”

Operation Predator evolved out of ICE’s mission to find and deport illegal aliens -- particularly those with criminal records, and reflects the agency’s traditional public safety mission. Those arrested fall into four general categories:

Foreign National Child Predators: More than 85 percent of the arrests in Operation Predator involve foreign national sex offenders whose crimes make them removable from the United States. To date, more than 2,100 of these predators have been deported. Locally, those cases include:

- ❑ ***Northern California Rape Suspect:*** In February, ICE agents arrested a 39-year-old Mexican national who was wanted in Tulare County for sexually assaulting a minor. Jose Games Magana was taken into custody when he showed up for a scheduled appointment at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office in San Bernardino. USCIS officials alerted ICE agents about Magana's appointment after a routine records check revealed his outstanding warrant. Magana is charged with molesting a female relative beginning when she was eight-years-old. ICE arranged for Magana to be transported to the San Bernardino Sheriff's Central Detention Center pending his return to Tulare County for trial.

International Child Sex Tourists: Working cooperatively with foreign governments through ICE's attaché offices worldwide, ICE agents made the first 12 arrests under the child sex tourism provisions of the PROTECT Act. Consider this case:

- ❑ ***86-year-old Man Planned to Meet With Preteen Girls From the Philippines for Sex:*** ICE agents arrested John W. Seljan in October 2003, as he prepared to board a flight at LAX to engage in sex with two Philippine girls, ages 9 and 12. In his luggage, ICE agents discovered child pornography, sexual aids, and nearly 100 pounds of chocolates and candy. In November 2004, Seljan was convicted on six counts. He is scheduled to be sentenced March 7 and faces a maximum penalty of 270 years in prison.

Human Smuggling & Trafficking of Children: The criminal networks engaged in human smuggling and trafficking have become more violent and more profit-driven than ever before. At the same time, some of their victims are getting younger and younger.

- ❑ ***Irvine Couple Charged for Holding Egyptian Girl as Domestic Slave:*** Eid Youssef Ibrahim, 44, and Amal Ahmed Ewis-abd Motelib, 41, are under indictment on involuntary servitude charges for allegedly enslaving a 12-year-old girl in their garage for two years and forcing her to work as a domestic servant for their family. The couple, who were married at the time of the alleged offense, are accused of conspiring to hold the victim in involuntary servitude and obtain her services by force and coercion.

Internet Child Pornography: Drawing on ICE's cyber crime investigative expertise, ICE is tackling the crimes that cross the nation's virtual borders. Moreover, through the National Child Victim Identification System, more than 1,600 pornographic images containing child pornography have been authenticated.

- ❑ ***Irvine Physician Charged with Possessing Child Pornography:*** Clayton Carr, a licensed general family practice physician, is slated to go on trial in Newport Beach later this month for possessing and duplicating child pornography. The case is based on leads generated by an ICE investigation into a company in Belarus that provided credit card billing services for some 50 child pornography websites. In March 2004, ICE agents served a search warrant at Carr's Irvine residence and recovered some 200 CD ROM's containing more than 50,000 images and movie files depicting child pornography. ICE agents also seized a videotape featuring more than 20 scenes of children engaging in sexually explicit acts. As a result of the investigation, the California State Medical Board has restricted Carr from practicing medicine on individuals under the age of 21 pending the outcome of the case.

Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the Web at www.ice.gov. ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

Editor's Note: B-roll, including video of arrests, an interview with Assistant Secretary Garcia, and graphics will be available via satellite at 12:00 noon PST. The coordinates for the video feed are: GALAXY 3/C-Band Transponder 6, Vertical: 95° West, Downlink frequency: 3820 Mhz.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.